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Winchester volunteers make the difference in the battle against invasive plants

RACHEL WHITEHOUSE | CORRESPONDENT

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Volunteers on the shores of the Aberjona River, at Judkins Pond. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO/RACHEL WHITEHOUSE

Winchester residents rolled up their sleeves this past Saturday to tackle a formidable foe: invasive plant species along the Aberjona River.

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More than 45 volunteers of all ages gathered at Judkins Pond and Borggaard Beach on Oct. 26 to lend a hand in the Winchester Conservation Commission's second Fall Invasive Plant Clean-Up Day. Equipped with clippers and shovels, they worked to clear tenacious invasive plants that choke out native flora.

Controlling invasive species like bittersweet vines, Tree of Heaven, knotweed, and bamboo is essential for maintaining the natural balance of Winchester's waterways. These aggressive non-native plants can quickly overtake native vegetation, disrupting habitats and threatening the local biodiversity that the river supports, including bird species and other wildlife.

"Days like this wouldn't be possible without our volunteers," said Elaine Vreeland, Conservation Commission administrator. "Take a moment to look at the shorelines at Judkins Pond, Elliott Park, and Borggaard Beach to see how lovely they look."

Over the years, the Conservation Commission's goals have evolved.

"Back in the late 1980s, our Aberjona Cleanup Days were all about picking up trash," Vreeland recalled. "Now, we're focusing on both trash and invasive species in the spring, and dedicating our fall day entirely to invasives."

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"We appreciate the many individuals and groups that share a common interest in restoring Wedge Pond as a wildlife habitat and beautif

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recreation space for all Winchester residents to enjoy," said Conservation Commission member William Band.

In addition to individuals, groups such as the Friends of Wedge Pond, Friends of Winchester Recreation, the Winchester Tennis Association, and students from Winchester High School's environmental studies class pitched in.

Band also highlighted the ongoing support from the town and key partners, especially Mike Wise and Jimmy Ditullio from Winchester DPW, as well as Recreation Director Nick Cacciolfi, for facilitating access to Borggaard Beach.

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EVENTS

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NEWS

Winchester School C… candidates bring con… backgrounds to Thursday forum

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The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

March 4, 2026

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 4, 2026

FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

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